1: Métraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SM3 Caingang SM3

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Chiefs wield little authority. They work in their fields and hunt like the rank and file of the group. Their position is conspicuous only when the community organizes a big feast, which is always given in the chief's name. Chiefs also are the leaders of any collective undertaking. They maintain their hold on their people by distributing gifts and looking after their well-being (Koenigswald, 1908 b, p. 47). A chief who is overbearing or miserly is abandoned by his followers. The son of a chief succeeds to his father if he is acceptable to the group (Horta Barbosa, 1913, p. 25). 622

LIFE CYCLE

Birth and childhood.—Formerly, a pregnant *Caingang* woman did not consort with her husband, and both observed food taboos. Women gave birth in the forest, sheltered from the supposedly malefi-cent moonbeams.[4] A few days after delivery the mother and child were fumigated, a rite accompanied by a drinking bout. 843 844 [852]

Nowadays, a *Caingang* woman bears her child wherever she happens to be, knowing how to take care of herself even if she is alone. Usually, she is delivered squatting while a midwife embraces her from behind, raising her now and then until travail is over. The navel cord is cut with a fingernail and tied with a caraguatá string.

Among the *Aweikoma*, the placenta and umbelical cord, wrapped in medicinal herbs, are placed in a basket and sunk in the stream. The mother winds a long cord around the ankles of the baby and removes it 15 days later during a feast given by the father to a group of relatives. The umbilical cord is disposed of by the mother's brother or his wife or by the mother's sister, who later become ceremonial parents. 846

In other *Caingang* groups, the mother pulls open the infant's eyelids immediately after birth "in order that he might see," breathes into his eyes and ears, and presses his temples and head from front to back. The father does not pay much attention to the baby until it is old enough to speak: Then he gives it 5 to 10 names. In the south, the names were bestowed without any rite after the above-mentioned ceremony. [553]

The *Caingang* show the greatest tenderness to their children, seldom punishing them or using harsh words. 854

According to Horta Barbosa (1913, p. 27), when a boy reaches the age of 7, his mother rubs his body with the leaves of a certain tree and pours water over his head to make him courageous and diligent. 852 553

[4] It is reported that they gave birth unassisted in a special cabin (Serrano, 1939, p. 26).